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TECHNICAL REPORT

An Evaluation Framework for “Foundations for Living”

Supporting Disabled People to
Live Independently in the
Community

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Prepared for the Papworth Trust

The research described in this report was prepared for the Papworth Trust.

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Executive summary

Background to the project

Foundations for Living (FfL), a new independent living project for disabled people, is a positive response to both national and local factors. At the national level the social model of disability has gained more acceptance in the UK and there has been a wide adoption of policies that facilitate independent living opportunities for disabled people. These include the Community Care Act 1990, which sought to improve the living conditions of those in care; and the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act 1996, which aims to offer disabled people the opportunity to budget their own care and support needs and purchase the services themselves. More recently the government has produced several papers on the future of social care in the UK: *Valuing People* (2001); *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* (2005); and *Independence, Well-Being and Choice* (2005). These all put forward the case for an independent living solution to social care issues in Britain. Independent living in this context includes housing choice, tailoring services to needs, opportunities for employment, increased social integration and, predominantly, the three principles of choice, empowerment and control.

At the local level, a number of factors influenced the creation of FfL. There was the local need to change the existing residential accommodation (Robert Ellis House, providing accommodation for 30 people in 2001), as it did not conform to the standards required under the Care Standards Act 1990. This gave the Papworth Trust the option of either building a new residential home or developing a new model of service provision. Coupled with this was the need to address issues of social isolation that the village location of Papworth Everard created. Tenants and residents within the village were feeling isolated from the local towns since transport links are poor from the village. Potential clients for the Papworth Trust were also being put off by the village location and the residential accommodation.

In response to these challenges the Papworth Trust consulted their clients to understand what they wanted from a new service. The responses suggested a clear preference for moving to the nearest town (Huntingdon) that was seen to offer more independent living opportunities. These opportunities were particularly centred on better access to shops and social life. Informed by these preferences, and with sufficient finance and fund-raising capacity, the Papworth Trust embarked on a series of activities that were to lead to the Foundations for Living project.

Foundations for Living is based on the principle of providing a range of services, delivered through an inclusive community-based approach, to address disadvantages experienced by disabled people. The project includes three main elements:

- 24 fully wheelchair accessible flats in a town centre location, with flexible personal care and support arrangements. Eight of these flats are provided alongside a further 20 flats for sale on the open market.
- A Community Learning Centre that provides lifelong learning and accessible meeting facilities for all sections of the community, including disabled people.
- A Community Outreach Service to support disabled people to access community facilities and thereby improve equality for disabled people in the local community.

The Papworth Trust believes the project provides an innovative model for service development. RAND Europe was invited to provide this formal evaluation in the autumn of 2005. Using documentary evidence from government, the Papworth Trust and research in the fields of disability service provision and social care, we identified priority areas to focus the evaluation framework.

Using this background, and the expertise of the Papworth Trust management team, we built a model of the FfL evaluation. This evaluation framework is built around six dimensions of evaluation (relevance; process evaluation; efficiency; effectiveness; utility; sustainability/social acceptance). Within each of these points of evaluation we identified a number of measures (performance indicators) that can show how the FfL project is progressing against its original objectives.

In order to validate the model, we interviewed key stakeholders involved in FfL. This included clients of the Papworth Trust (both those who had moved to Huntingdon already and those involved in the process who were not living in Huntingdon), staff, Papworth Trust management and wider stakeholders, such as organisations that are partners in the FfL process.

Key findings

The majority of those clients who had already moved to Huntingdon as part of the FfL project, report a marked increase in both their independence and in their own quality of life. In some cases, this could even be said to have been a life-changing experience. For clients the main drive for independence was easier access to shops, work and a social life.

One main tension was identified between client choice and the organisation’s aim of optimal utilisation of resources, appropriateness and fairness. Specifically, this was between the need for person centred planning³ and the organisation’s aim to produce a service that can be used by any client wishing to access it in the future. Later, the tension was also seen, with some clients wanting higher levels of support than others to help them make choices and live independently. However, the Trust was only able to resource a certain level of support.

³ Person centred planning is providing services that are tailored to the needs of individual clients.

Those staff who remained after the closure of the Robert Ellis House residential home in Papworth Everard, adjusted well to the new demands of a different working style, sometimes even surprising themselves by finding new ways of working. Often the staff's tacit knowledge on how to provide support within the new system was passed from one to another. However, the emergent nature of the FfL project⁴ meant that training needs were difficult to identify prior to the start of the project. In these early stages, informal communication and improvement processes compensated for weaker formal change management. More recently, formal processes have been put in place.

Wider stakeholders (those organisations with which the Papworth Trust has entered into partnerships as part of FfL) reported the need for clear communication between organisations associated with FfL, particularly a single point of contact with whom an organisation could work. The main problems experienced by wider stakeholders were also to do with the emergent nature of the FfL project and the changing commissioning context (especially regarding the funding under "Supporting People"⁵). There was a tension between the need for clarity of purpose at the outset and the unfolding nature of FfL restricting clarity early on.

However, the deliberately emergent nature of the FfL strategy has contributed greatly to the success of the initial stages of the project. Interviews with the senior management team make it clear that without the opportunistic approach to the project, the chance to purchase land, enter into partnerships and manage client expectations would have been missed. This could be described as *structured opportunism*, allowing the project to maximise opportunities as they have arisen. This emergent strategy also allowed navigation of FfL in a continually evolving external policy environment, where statutory organisations and funding streams change regularly.

A further tension existed over the reallocation of responsibility for individuals' support costs. As clients of the Papworth Trust have moved from residential to independent living accommodation, responsibility for their support costs has switched from their commissioning authority (their home county council's budget) to the authority within which they are resident. Therefore, despite independent living accommodation providing a lower cost per individual than residential care, those costs have all come to rest on the local council (Cambridgeshire County Council), increasing the cost to them specifically. This is a wider issue beyond the FfL Project, arising as more individuals move from residential care to independent living.

FfL project outputs so far are mainly infrastructural. These include the first housing development in Huntingdon that conforms to the appropriate standards for fully wheelchair accessible housing. The buildings for the other two housing developments and the community learning centre, although not complete, represent significant outputs. Aside from buildings, Papworth Trust staff's level of satisfaction within their new role is also a positive output.

⁴ Allowing the Papworth Trust to steer the project according to the opportunities arising, rather than sticking to a rigid business plan.

⁵ The Supporting People programme provides housing related support services to over 1.2 million vulnerable people in the way of local authority funding. See <http://tinyurl.com/ogsqj> for more details.

FfL has addressed several key elements of national policy. In terms of addressing the barriers to independent living identified in *Disablist Britain: Barriers to independent living for disabled people in 2006*,⁶ the project allows disabled people a number of routes to greater independence (see Table 1 for examples).

Table 1. How FfL addresses the barriers to independent living for disabled people in the UK

Barrier to independent living	How FfL addresses the barrier
Education and training	Co-location with the new community learning centre allows easy access to a variety of courses Courses offered in association with Huntingdon Regional College – both academic and vocational
Employment	Partnership with the local college offers training opportunities in employment focused skills (e.g. IT skills) Community support team liaise with local employers to facilitate employment opportunities for disabled people Community support team will liaise with local employers to help them understand disabled people's needs in the workplace
Housing and social care	Flats are fitted with appropriate equipment to facilitate independence for specific clients – decisions made in association with the tenant themselves Independent living training provided for staff and tenants to make home life easier Support staff in the nearby community learning centre on call if needed
Transport	Housing in the town centre makes travel simpler and cheaper if taxis are needed Town centre location means is served by regular public transport from a variety of locations
Leisure and social life	Town centre base means easy access to shops and leisure facilities Interspersing accessible supported housing with for-sale flats makes forming relationships with non-disabled neighbours easier Provides the opportunity to partake in community groups in the community learning centre Town centre location means that there are more people around to socialise with and it is easier to get to them
Democratic participation	Town centre placement means that there is an opportunity to be actively involved in local political issues Community support team can advise on democratic process and how individuals fit into it

Recommendations

The Papworth Trust is committed to identifying performance indicators (PIs) that are focused on its core aims and objectives, appropriate to the needs of its decision-makers and stakeholders, balanced across its broad priorities, robust despite staff changes, integrated into its planning processes, and cost effective to collect. This process of identifying PIs is

⁶ Miller, P. Gillinson S and Huber J (2006) “Disablist Britain: Barriers to independent living for disabled people in 2006”, DEMOS, SCOPE.

precisely aligned with best practice as described by HM Treasury and others.⁷ This evaluation report supports and reinforces these aims and identifies ways of delivering them.

Integration of PIs into wider performance management processes

Using logic models to map the delivery of FfL provides a basis for achieving this integration. The PIs should be integrated into the wider performance management processes of the organisation, and the logic models must therefore be shared with, and if necessary amended by, management to provide a shared template of aims, resources, processes, outputs and outcomes. We recommend the further use of logic models in this way.

Logic models should not be applied too rigidly

Care should be taken to ensure that the logic models promote flexibility and organisational learning. The clients and partner organisations of the Papworth Trust have benefited from the flexibility, responsiveness and opportunism of the Trust's management during the development and delivery of FfL. This argues against too rigid an application of the logic models: they should be used to provide a basis for learning what has happened and changing what happens in the future.

PIs should support learning and accountability

The approach recommended here is for PIs to support learning. However, this must be balanced with the need to have stable, longer-term performance indicators to support the accountability of management and staff to funders, the wider community and to clients. We recommend that, in finalising its list of PIs, the Trust should have a requisite variety of indicators that satisfy the need both for organisational learning and for accountability.

Maintenance and improvement of communication with stakeholders

Wherever the balance between learning and accountability is drawn, there is a need to communicate plans more clearly than in the past to clients, staff, partners and management. The Trust has been willing to engage these groups in its decision-making but a lack of clarity may have limited the effectiveness of these processes in the early stages of FfL. We recommend a continuing commitment to improving communications within the Trust and with strategic partners.

Use development of PIs to include clients in FfL decision processes

FfL aims to support choice for the clients of the Trust. Developing performance indicators should be seen as an opportunity to extend and deepen participation in the decision-making of the organisation rather than as a challenge to its commitment to client involvement.

Recommended PIs

We recommend that PIs should be adopted in the six dimensions of evaluation (relevance; process evaluation; efficiency; effectiveness; utility; sustainability and social acceptance);

⁷ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_spending_and_services/publicservice_performance/pss_perf_pischeck.cfm

these are detailed in the body of the report. Many of these data can be collected as part of the routine management and supervision by the Trust. Other data will be needed as part of existing accountability arrangements. Any new data collection might be infrequent; consequently collection of this new data need not be unnecessarily costly.

Relevance – Taken from trustee and strategic management group reports

A qualitative judgement about the fit between the aims and objectives of FfL and the wider goals of the Papworth Trust.

Process Evaluation - Service user involvement index

This is an innovative way of summarising a basket of characteristics in a figure, collecting a spread of person centre data on the level of involvement in FfL service users feel they have. These can assess the strengths and weaknesses of FfL and compare them across years and sections of the project.

Process Evaluation - Staff review, performance and development

The ongoing appraisal of staff should be used to provide anonymised data on staff progress towards delivering the goals of FfL. An annual questionnaire should provide more data on how staff understand what facilitates and inhibits their contribution to delivering the aims of FfL.

Process Evaluation - Questionnaire for partner organisations

An annual survey of partner organisations should identify levels of satisfaction with the processes implemented in FfL (including such issues as transparency, communication, and timeliness).

Efficiency - Staff support (training offered, development plans)

The cost of delivering training and other staff support to allow the efficient delivery of FfL.

Efficiency - Use of facilities

Data on the use of facilities such as housing (occupancy rates), community learning centre (numbers participating in courses), community support team and day support services.

Efficiency - Cost of facilities

The cost of providing and maintaining facilities. This could be benchmarked against costs in comparable organisations.

Effectiveness – Indices of independent living

We propose an innovative basket of indices allowing the Papworth Trust to summarise the effectiveness of its work with clients. These allow a spread of person centred data to be collected with which to assess the strengths and weaknesses of FfL and to compare those both across years and across sections of the project.

Effectiveness – Reduced support costs

As individuals become more independent, their support needs are likely to fall. This can be measured in terms of financial support costs. This is a strong proxy for greater independence. However, if an individual's physical or mental condition deteriorates, they require additional support irrespective of the actions of the Trust.

Effectiveness – Individual progress towards independent living

Each individual's progress can be charted over time in all the dimensions where FfL hopes to have an effect.

Utility - Improved results from inspections

As a proxy for assessing how 'fit for purpose' FfL is, there should be an analysis of inspection reports, and the documentation of responses, as a part of the existing reporting system.

Sustainability and Social Acceptance - Financial

Information on the financial implications of FfL for the Trust's sustainability, and the financial impact on partner local authorities are part of the existing reporting system.

Sustainability and Social Acceptance - Rising client expectations and achievement

Measuring improved client expectations and achievements is not easy and requires either additional questioning during the process of information gathering for the indices, or the use of a proxy such as clients' requests to move into different accommodation, or clients' progression through the labour market.

Sustainability and Social Acceptance - Improved stakeholder engagement

An annual survey of partner organisations should identify levels of awareness of, commitment to, and incentives for supporting the aims of FfL. This could be managed as a simple telephone survey, a web-based survey, or as written document.

Sustainability and Social Acceptance - More staff recruited and retained with appropriate training and qualifications

This acts as a proxy for the success and acceptability of the project in terms of staff satisfaction reflecting the sort of project that some care and support staff want to be involved in. The quality of staff recruited can be measured by qualifications of applicants.

Sustainability and Social Acceptance - Wider and deeper life choices

Life choices include working and volunteering opportunities, choices over service provision, shopping and so forth. These would be measured through the indices previously mentioned and through data on employment and volunteering.

Conclusions

Papworth Trust embarked on the Foundations for Living project as a result of needing to provide accommodation for 30 disabled people living in residential care. In consultation

with the residents, and in response to emerging policy and practice in the field of independent living, the project evolved to include a number of elements (accessible housing, a community learning centre and community outreach) based on the principles of inclusion and independent living.

The project is distinctive in providing an integrated approach to addressing many of the barriers experienced by disabled people wanting to live independently in the community. The location of employment, housing and day support services in the community learning centre increases the opportunities for a single point of entry to a “joined up” seamless service for disabled people in the community.

The evaluation strategy identified in this document has set out a model for formally identifying and monitoring the outcomes from the project, and has identified some emergent findings.

Subsequent stages of the research will compare the FfL project to others that aim to achieve similar outcomes, so that best practice can be identified and shared. It will also monitor the outcomes from the project over the longer term to see if levels of independence and inclusion continue to increase, and to identify factors for success in future projects.